



INHURED International

Ref: Trafficking and Sale of Nepali Children Abroad

Brief Report of Emergency Consultation

7th April, 2016, Kathmandu

“Take this kiddie to England for £5K” the headline published in The Sun, a British Daily tabloid startled everyone in Nepal, the news reported the incidence of trafficking and selling of Nepalese children as slaves who have been victims of disaster-induced displacement and unsafe mobility across the border. This news was published on 4th April, 2016 as Sun Investigation exposing the sad truth behind the young survivors of the Nepalese earthquake.

On 7th April, 2016 an emergency meeting was called by the Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare Chandra Prakash Mainali at the Ministry. Invitees included representatives from civil society, concerned state authorities and law-enforcement officials who are responsible for tackling the issue. This stakeholder meeting’s main agenda was to discuss the possible steps to be taken in order to unveil the truth and take effective measures to combat the crime. It was a very intense discussion session, where all the stakeholders expressed their deep concern that such an incident warrants urgent national attention with immediate action.

The concerns that were raised during discussion were that how could such a clandestine crime take place even amidst massive presence of concerned stakeholders in the earthquake-affected communities and preventive measures. It could be the result of a weak monitoring of the unsafe mobility and migration of the affected community which generally results in trafficking of children by criminal gangs.

The suggestions that came from the discussion were as under:

- 1) The government must find out the reality behind the alarming news items that appeared in The Sun.
- 2) A proper coordination among governmental and non-governmental organization has to be reinforced to ensure accountability of the concerned agencies.
- 3) Besides preventive measures, border vigilance must be strengthened to monitor the movement of the people.
- 4) Surveillance groups in possible transit points both within the community, villages and international borders (including porous border areas) needs to be formed and strengthened
- 5) Massive awareness program among families, children and school setting needs to be designed and implemented in the given extremely vulnerable situation in the communities.

- 6) Since the earthquake has hit the economic status of the affected area hard; the government should prioritize the reconstruction program with community resilient and empowerment approach so that they could work to stabilize their economic status and social ties.

The closing of discussion was led by the Honorable Deputy Prime Minister C.P. Mainali. He summarized the discussion and the outcomes for further action as follows:

- 1) Using diplomatic channels to find out the reality and the truth behind the news reporting which will be carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- 2) Conducting domestic investigation in a collaborative effort of civil society and police force;
- 3) Critical analysis of the weakness of the concerned state authorities and close monitoring of the irregular channels;
- 4) Identifying and nabbing racket(s) with vigorous intervention who may have been involved in trafficking in person;
- 5) Recording the information of parents who take their children with them while travelling and ensuring that they return with their children;
- 6) Robust checks of suspicious mobility across the borders especially of minors ; and
- 7) Discouraging and controlling unauthorized volunteerism in the disaster-affected communities.

INHURED's Position:

In our opinion, analyzing critically the current issue and after taking part in the discussion, there are still few questions that need to be answered regarding trafficking in persons especially regarding the procedure of acquiring legal documents for those 'sold' children. Categorically asking, how are they getting the travel permits and visas to travel abroad? Whether or not the inter-country adoption is being used to disguise the trafficking of children for labor? Are those children survivors of the fresh mobility due to the devastating earthquake or they have been there with their parents as part of the seasonal migrant workers?

The government must engage in diplomatic level with the concerned countries to explore the truth on the mode of travel and the visa permits etc. around the reported incident. Additionally, the authorities, in collaboration with CSOs needs to prepare a proper database on missing children and migrant workers to prevent unsafe mobility both in-country and inter-country migration. Special attention should be given with revamped strategy to prevent human trafficking in areas of disaster-induced displacement and conflict situations. Finally, the accountability of the demand side must be established and the perpetrators must be brought to justice regardless of their nationality or status.

Report Prepared by: Ms. Merina Dangol and Ms. Bimala Lamichhane, INHURED International (www.inhuredinternational.org)